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Statement by the President of the Security Council

At the 4864th meeting of the Security Council, held on 19 November 2003, in connection with the Council's consideration of the item entitled "The importance of mine action for peacekeeping operations", the President of the Security Council made the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council expresses its grave concern at the harmful and widespread impact of landmines and unexploded ordnance on civilian populations, especially children, and on humanitarian workers and United Nations staff, and, in this regard, stresses the vital importance of eliminating the threat of landmines.

"The Security Council recognizes the long-term consequences of landmines and unexploded ordnance for durable peace, security and development.

"The Security Council welcomes the effective coordination of mine action activities within the United Nations system and the important mandate of the United Nations Mine Action Service of the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, in particular the role of UNMAS in ensuring the coordination of mine action throughout the United Nations system and the provision of support to multidimensional peace operations, as well as the role of UNDP in addressing the problem from a development perspective, and providing technical, management and resource mobilization assistance to Governments of mine-affected States, and the role of UNICEF as the lead agency for mine risk education. The Council also recognizes the significant contribution to mine action made by States, international and regional organizations and local and international non-governmental organizations.

"The Security Council urges all Member States to respect relevant international law that addresses landmines and unexploded ordnance, and the rights of persons affected by them, stressing the importance of international technical assistance in helping mine-affected States to harmonize their domestic laws with international obligations.

"The Security Council urges all parties to armed conflicts to abide by their mine-related commitments, and to cooperate to the fullest extent possible, with mine risk education and mine-clearing activities, and to ensure that abandoned stockpiles are adequately guarded, or destroyed.

"The Security Council encourages Governments whose countries are affected by the presence of landmines and unexploded ordnance to include a mine action impact assessment in all development planning and to incorporate

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a strategic plan for mine action in the national development plan and poverty reduction strategies.

"The Security Council recognizes that mine action can play an important role in peace-building and confidence-building in post-conflict situations and encourages mine-affected States to strengthen cooperation with the United Nations, relevant non-governmental organizations, and civil society, where appropriate.

"The Security Council calls upon the Secretary-General to provide information on the scope and humanitarian impact of the mine and unexploded ordnance problem in all relevant country-specific reports to the Security Council, and expresses its readiness to consider mine action concerns in all of its country-specific deliberations, as appropriate.

"The Security Council notes the importance of ensuring that the provision of technical advice and support for mine action is reflected in the mandates and personnel planning for peacekeeping operations and expresses its intention to address mine action concerns in the mandates and personnel planning for peacekeeping operations whenever appropriate.

"The Security Council recognizes the contribution that peacekeeping personnel can make in the areas of mine risk education and demining and calls upon troop-contributing countries, where appropriate, to train selected personnel to demine in accordance with the International Mine Action Standards.

"The Security Council recognizes the important role mine action can play in disarmament, demobilization and reintegration efforts by employing former soldiers in mine action programmes and encourages the Secretary-General to consider including mine action in DDR initiatives and to reflect such proposals in his reports to the Security Council, as appropriate.

"The Security Council urges Member States, as appropriate, to provide adequate and sustained financial assistance to support mine action and alleviate the suffering of populations affected by mines and unexploded ordnance, and whenever possible, increase their support through further contributions to the Voluntary Trust Fund for Assistance in Mine Action and calls particular attention to the need to address the socio-economic, physical and psychosocial reintegration of landmine survivors, the need to facilitate the orderly return of refugees and internally displaced persons affected by mines and unexploded ordnance, the need to restore land to productive use, and the need to prioritize mine action efforts to enable the risk-free movement of people and goods.

"The Security Council considers that a comprehensive and coordinated approach by Member States, the United Nations, regional and local organizations is required to address the threat and the impact of mines and unexploded ordnance.

"To this end, the Council supports the general review made by the General Assembly on this matter since 1993 and invites the Secretary-General to address this subject, as needed, in his reports on the general activities of peacekeeping operations."